United Nations S/PV.7828

# Security Council

Seventy-first year

*Provisional*

**7828**th meeting

Wednesday, 7 December 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. González de Linares Palou | (Spain) |
| *Members*: | Angola | Mr. Lucas |
| | China | Mr. Xu Zhongsheng |
| | Egypt | Mr. Kandeel |
| | France | Mrs. Gueguen Mohsen |
| | Japan | Mr. Okamura |
| | Malaysia | Mrs. Adnin |
| | New Zealand | Mr. Wright |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Iliichev |
| | Senegal | Mr. Barro |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Yelchenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Hickey |
| | United States of America | Mr. Klein |
| | Uruguay | Mr. Bermúdez |
| | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | Mr. Suárez Moreno |

## Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2016/996)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Central African region**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2016/996)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. François Louncény Fall, Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/996, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fall.

**Mr. Fall**: I have the honour to address the Council for the first time since I took office on 1 November and to introduce the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The report before the Council (S/2016/996) presents the main threats to peace and security in Central Africa, as well as an update on the activities undertaken by UNOCA in the past six months, in consultation with Member States, United Nations entities and subregional organizations.

Over the past five weeks, I have met with a number of Heads of State and Government on the margins of the fourth African-Arab Summit, in Malabo, and at the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in Libreville. As part of my introductory meetings with national authorities, I also met with a broad range of political stakeholders in Cameroon, Chad, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

Despite a peaceful and successful transition in the Central African Republic earlier this year, the recent outbreak of violence resulted in high numbers of fatalities, thus demonstrating once more the extreme fragility of the situation as well as the continued threat that the presence of armed groups in the country represents for the entire subregion. The violence is taking place even as the country embarks upon recovery and peace consolidation efforts. While enormous challenges remain, the Government of the Central African Republic has made important progress by engaging with the armed groups through a formal framework. That resulted in the adoption, on 4 November, of a national strategy on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation that is supported by 11 of the main 14 armed groups.

Sustained assistance by international partners, including the subregion, will be required to help the country achieve lasting peace and stability. In that vein, I welcome the holding of the international donors' conference in Brussels last month, where important pledges were made towards recovery and stabilization efforts. It is now imperative that those pledges be quickly disbursed. The Extraordinary Summit of ECCAS Heads of State held on 30 November further reinforced the efforts undertaken by the Government of the Central African Republic and President Touadera to consolidate peace and place the country on a path towards recovery and stability. The Summit also supported the African Union initiative that, with the support of ECCAS, the United Nations and bilateral and multilateral partners, would seek to facilitate a peace agreement with the armed groups. UNOCA will continue to support efforts to reduce the presence and threat posed by the armed groups.

On 15 November, a United Nations-mediated agreement was signed in Marrakesh, Kingdom of Morocco, between the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the Gabonese Republic to submit their long-standing border dispute to the International Court of Justice. What remains is for the two parties to ratify the special agreement at the national level, following which it will be submitted to the Court. It is our sincere hope that the peaceful settlement of the border dispute will be a source of inspiration for other countries facing similar challenges, by demonstrating that a peaceful and legal settlement is available and possible.

Since the previous briefing to the Council by my predecessor (see S/PV.7718), presidential elections were held in Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. In some countries of the subregion, persisting political tensions

arising from recent or upcoming electoral processes serve to underline the importance of genuine and inclusive political dialogue, including on meaningful democratic reforms to foster long-term stability. I will continue to use my good offices to engage with the relevant political and civil society actors in order to encourage the peaceful resolution of persisting political and socioeconomic grievances through inclusive dialogue and confidence-building measures, in consultation with regional and international partners. Similarly, I will continue to offer the good offices of the United Nations to ensure the peaceful conduct of upcoming legislative polls in the region.

The collective efforts of the Lake Chad basin countries in fighting terrorism have resulted in substantial military and security successes. The Multinational Joint Task Force has continued cross-border operations and has reclaimed much of the territory controlled by Boko Haram. Nonetheless, the group continues to carry out asymmetric attacks, mainly targeting civilians. Its capacity to cause mayhem should not be underestimated and, as such, Boko Haram remains a serious threat to regional stability. The activities of Boko Haram have greatly undermined development and exacerbated the economic hardship in the countries of the Lake Chad basin. The situation of refugees and internally displaced persons, in particular women and children, continues to remain a cause for serious concern, as persistent attacks by Boko Haram have hindered access by humanitarian actors to the affected areas. In November, UNOCA, in its capacity as secretariat of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, organized a visit of the Committee's Bureau to Cameroon and Chad to assess the impact of the Boko Haram violence.

While the Lake Chad basin countries are bearing financial responsibility for combating Boko Haram, the available resources are insufficient to finance the operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force and to effectively support humanitarian and early recovery activities. Timely support for the Task Force in terms of finances, logistics and equipment remains critical to strengthen the force's operational capacity and maintain the progress made. The complete eradication of the group will remain a long-term venture through sustained determination and vigilance, coupled with a holistic approach aimed at tackling the root causes of violent extremism, including marginalization and extreme poverty. In that regard, there is an urgent need to ensure funding for early recovery and development activities in liberated areas, including measures to reintegrate defectors and their families into their respective societies. It is our hope that the planned joint summit of ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States on Boko Haram will take place without further delay, with the aim of developing a regional strategy that addresses the political, security, humanitarian and development challenges. The United Nations stands ready to support the region in that endeavour.

(*spoke in French*)

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to threaten regional security, in particular for the populations of the eastern part of the Central African Republic and the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The large number of LRA attacks on civilians continues to cause untold suffering and serious humanitarian consequences. The group's activities are also linked to the poaching and trafficking in wild species in the subregion. We must remain united and determined in our efforts to fight the LRA.

UNOCA has maintained its commitment on this issue, including through the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to counter the LRA and address the effects of the group's activities, as well as through coordination efforts. In cooperation with the African Union, next week UNOCA will organize in Entebbe, Uganda, the biannual meeting of LRA focal points. Last August, a team made up of representatives from UNOCA, the African Union, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo travelled to Bria and Obo, Central African Republic, to assess the LRA threat. Similarly, in October, a joint UNOCA-African Union mission visited Dungu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. During those two visits, the team met with civilian and military partners to discuss measures to counter the LRA.

The United Nations remains concerned about the announced withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the African Union Regional Task Force on 31 December. However, from the latest news I understand that the troops are to remain in place until April next year. This withdrawal would lead to a security vacuum that the LRA would use to circulate freely and attack the

populations of the areas concerned. The collective efforts against the LRA could therefore be compromised by the withdrawal of Ugandan troops.

Piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea have increased this year, with 50 cases registered at present. Unfortunately, the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea is not yet fully operational and has only one staff member running day-to-day operations, the programme of activities, the budget and the administration for the period 2016-2017. The recruitment of permanent staff for the Centre is ongoing and should be completed by the end of the year.

I am pleased to report that on 15 October, an extraordinary summit of the African Union was held in Lomé and adopted the African Union Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development. We welcome the adoption of the Charter, which seeks to prevent national and cross-border crime, including terrorism, illegal trafficking in wild species and piracy.

The continued support of the Security Council remains crucial for the promotion of peace and stability in Central Africa. UNOCA will continue to work with the Member States of the subregion to achieve that objective.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Fall for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.*